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EDUCATION WEEK

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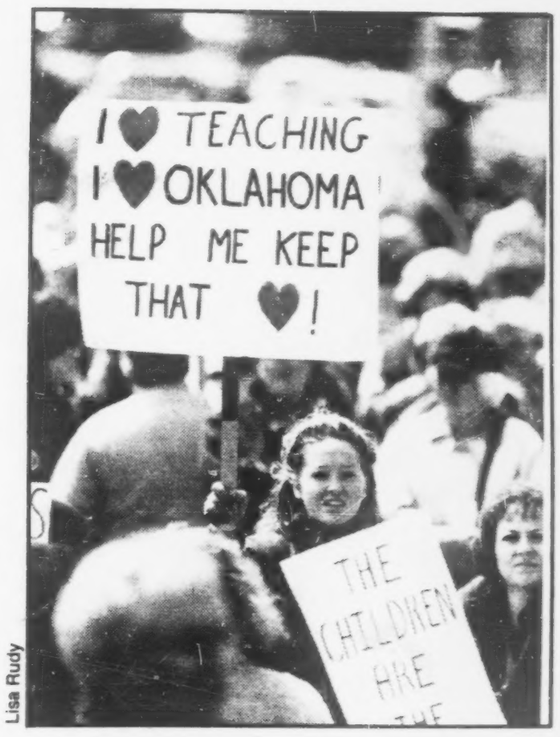

Lisa Rudy

Thousands of teachers rally at the State Capitol in Oklahoma City last week.

Teacher Attrition Rate Much Lower Than Assumed, New Surveys Find

By Lynn Olson

BOSTON—In its first measure of teacher attrition in more than two decades, the National Center for Education Statistics has found that the percentage of teachers leaving the profession each year may be much lower than previously assumed.

Preliminary results from a set of new national surveys released here last week show that approximately 4.1 percent of public-school teachers left the profession in 1987-88, compared with 6.9 percent in 1969, the last year for which the Education Department collected data.

At a time of great concern about teacher shortages, the new estimate is significant, because the number of teachers who leave the profession annually is the most important figure in projecting the demand for new teachers. A 2 percent reduction in the attrition rate means that approximately 50,000 fewer teachers are leaving teaching each year than had previously been determined.

The preliminary findings, released here last week at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, are based on the new Schools and Staffing Survey, an integrated set of surveys that is expected to provide the most detail ever collected on the nation's teaching force. The massive undertaking is expected to improve estimates of teacher supply and demand, allow analyses of teacher

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Judges May Order Increase in Taxes, High Court Rules

Kansas City Case Turns On Judiciary's Authority

By William Snider

WASHINGTON—In a decision that surprised and delighted many civil-rights advocates, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in a 5-to-4 decision last week that a federal judge's powers to remedy a constitutional violation include the authority to order a governmental body to raise taxes.

All nine Justices concurred in the result of the case, which struck down a tax increase imposed directly by a federal judge on property owners in the Kansas City, Mo., school district.

But five members of the Court upheld an appellate-court ruling that the judge could instead order the district to raise taxes to fund its share of a half-billion-dollar desegregation remedy.

Excerpts on page 20

"To hold otherwise," said the opinion written by Associate Justice Byron R. White, "would fail to take account of obligations of local governments, under the Supremacy Clause, to fulfill the requirements that the Constitution imposes on them."

Some civil-rights advocates and constitutional scholars said the ruling allayed fears that the Court would use this case to re-

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Reform Bill Clears Its Final Legislative Hurdle in Oklahoma

By Michael Newman

Under intense pressure from protests that closed school systems throughout the state and brought thousands of teachers and their supporters to the State Capitol, the Oklahoma Senate last week gave final legislative approval to a long-delayed education-reform package.

Late last week Democratic senators forged an agreement on the reform measure, which calls for $230 million in new taxes.

The bill was assumed dead in the Senate two weeks ago, when it failed to win enough votes to include an emergency clause. Senate sponsors had for weeks refused to send the measure on to Gov. Henry Bellmon without the clause, which had the effect of making it more difficult for opponents to overturn the tax hikes through a ballot referendum.

After a six-hour caucus on April 19, however, Senate Democrats emerged with the two-thirds majority needed to approve the clause. The final vote was 32 to 14, with all but one of the chamber's Republicans voting in the negative.

Governor Bellmon, a Republican, is expected to sign the bill.

The emergency clause also allows the measure to take effect immediately, thus giving districts funds for the coming school year.

"The issue here is solving the school-funding crisis," said Karla Feeley, spokesman for the Oklahoma Education Association. "Our schools need that money now."

The week-long protest, which was called April 12 by Kyle Dahlem, president of the

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O.E.R.I. Chief Seeks To Bridge Gap Between Research, the Classroom

By Robert Rothman

BOSTON—The new research chief at the U.S. Education Department laid out a multifaceted agenda here last week for bridging the gap that exists between educational research and classroom practice.

Among his suggestions was the creation by "parents, business people, and others" of an educational equivalent to the *New England Journal of Medicine*—a publication that could "spread the word" about breakthroughs in teaching and learning with the same stature and credibility the medical journal brings to coverage of health-care advances.

"Our work has not yet translated into adequate results," said Christopher T. Cross, assistant secretary for educational research and improvement. "This has to change."

Mr. Cross's speech here to the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association was his first major address to core constituents. In it, he took schools of education to task for what he called "scandalous" barriers between research and teacher training, and outlined a range of federal initiatives designed to break down such barriers across the field.

"Research must lead to results—significant gains in learning," he said. "We must establish this—student learning—as 'due north' on our research compass."

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A Study in Contrasts: Education Appointees Under Bush, Reagan Differ in Policy, Attitude

By Julie A. Miller

WASHINGTON—Over the past year, President Bush and Secretary of Education Lauro F. Cavazos have quietly assembled a team of top-level education officials that differs markedly from those appointed under the Reagan Administration.

These personnel choices symbolize the differences in policy and attitude between the two Republican Administrations.

And they have gone a considerable way toward defrosting the chilly relationship between the executive branch and the education community that characterized the 1980's.

For the first time in a decade, education circles here are not abuzz with complaints

NEWS ANALYSIS

about Administration officials alleged to have ideological axes to grind or no expertise in the field.

"The Secretary and the President have

Continued on Page 23

Schools Falling Short In Aiding Emotionally Disturbed, Study Says

By Debra Viadero

The first comprehensive look at the quality of school life being provided the estimated 3 to 5 percent of U.S. children suffering from emotional and behavioral disorders is a portrait far from flattering.

In a book-length study to be published this summer, researchers from the Bank Street College of Education describe a group of schoolchildren floundering academically and dropping out—or being expelled—at disproportionately high rates.

They are students who are alternately ignored, isolated, misdiagnosed, or served in programs that seek to control their behavior, rather than teach them how to manage themselves.

At the Schoolhouse Door: An Examination of Programs and Policies for Children with Behavioral and Emotional Problems deals with a population experts have long called the "most neglected" of any handicapped population.

And though it catalogs serious deficiencies in many classrooms, the report also outlines some promising strategies being tried by a small but growing number of

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The state's pioneering 'truth in testing' law is being challenged in federal court.

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A new employment statute will make it easier to dismiss teachers for poor performance.

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Their level of enthusiasm could provide public schools with a model, researchers say.

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Nearly one-quarter of the children under age 6 in the United States are living in families whose incomes fall below the federal poverty standard, according to a new report. **Page 5.**

The Value of a Stable Home
Delinquent teenagers who grew up to become stable adults were far more likely to have come from two-parent homes than were their peers who committed crimes as adults, a study concludes. **Page 5.**

No 'Killer Tomatoes'?
Tomatoes grown from seeds that spent six years in space pose no health risks to schoolchildren who are growing them as part of a scientific experiment, NASA officials said last week. **Page 8.**

Ben Franklin's Largess
Philadelphia and Boston, the cities Benjamin Franklin remembered in his will with bequests for youth training, must decide how to spend the accumulated capital. **Page 8.**

Parental Involvement
Early findings from a national study confirm the belief that upper-income, well-educated parents pay more attention to their children's education than do poorer parents with less schooling. **Page 10.**

Choice and the Disabled
Acting on federal advice, Nebraska has amended its statewide open-enrollment program to require free transportation for participating handicapped students who need it. **Page 14.**

Budget Plan Advances
The House Budget Committee has approved a Democratic alternative to the Administration's fiscal 1991 budget that would authorize $2.5 billion more in funding for education programs. **Page 18.**

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ACROSS THE NATION

NATIONAL

Study Finds One-Third of Children Uninsured During 28-Month Period

Some 34 percent of Americans under age 18, or more than 17 million children, lacked any form of health insurance for at least one month during a 28-month period between 1985 and 1987, the U.S. Census Bureau has found.

The study, which covered a longer time period than previous bureau analyses, also found that almost half of female-headed households with children lacked private health insurance or were not covered by Medicaid for at least one month during the period studied.

One-fifth of all children under age 6 were covered by Medicaid for at least one month during the period.

Over all, about 28 percent of Americans, or 63 million people, were uninsured for at least one of the 28 months.

The study, released this month, employed a new way of measuring health-insurance coverage by monitoring coverage over an extended period of time. Traditional measures estimate how many people lack coverage at a particular time.

Using the traditional method, the study reported, 15.3 percent children under age 16 and 21.9 percent of those between the ages of 16 and 24 lacked insurance during the last quarter of 1988. Based on that method, 13 percent of the overall population, or 31.5 million people, lacked health insurance during that time.

STATES

Assaults, Weapons Posssessions Up In California Schools, Report Says

The number of students charged with assault and with possession of weapons in California schools increased dramatically during the 1988-89 school year, according to statistics released last week by the state education department.

Statewide, weapons charges increased by 21 percent and assaults by 12 percent over the previous school year, according to the report.

The report also states that 14 students were murdered in public schools during the year, twice the number the previous year. That total, however, includes the 6 children who were killed in January 1989 when a gunman fired on a schoolyard at the Cleveland Elementary School in Stockton, a department spokesman said.

Over all, crime increased by 5 percent over the previous school year, despite a 43 percent drop in drug-abuse charges and reductions in the rates of theft, robbery, and burglary, according to "School Crime in California," the department's fourth annual report to the legislature on crime in the schools.

Bill Honig, the state's superintendent of public instruction, argued that the statistics indicate that "our schools are safer than the communities that they serve."

But he also called the upward trend in weapons charges "especially alarming." Middle schools, he added, not only had the highest rate of crime per average school, but also showed increases in all categories of weapons possession.

Even before the figures were released, the *Los Angeles Times* reported that local educators complained that they were misleading because of wide discrepancies in the way individual districts report crimes.

Three Florida Teachers Sue State Over Use of Child-Abuse Registry

Three Florida teachers have gone to federal court in an effort to prod the state department of health and rehabilitative services to alter its practice of keeping a registry with the names of suspected child abusers.

The class action, brought on behalf of all persons who, like the teachers, have been linked to child abuse through the registry, was filed earlier this month in district court in Tallahassee.

The unnamed teachers contend state officials violated their due-process rights under the U.S. Constitution by listing them without first giving them a fair hearing.

In their suit, they ask the state welfare agency to remove their names from the list and to refrain from adding others until "minimal guarantees of due process" are in place.

The registry categorizes child-abuse cases as "confirmed," "indicated," or "unfounded." The teachers who filed suit were linked to cases that fall in the first two categories.

People listed as "confirmed" abusers are kept on the registry for 50 years and barred from holding any job involving children. Where child abuse is "indicated," the information is kept for seven years and is supposed to remain confidential.

The lawsuit contends that, in practice, however, the information is widely circulated.

■ **Three administrators in the Mesquite, Tex., school district, charged with violating security measures before administering a state minimum-skills test, have agreed to a voluntary one-year suspension of their teaching credentials.**

The Texas Education Agency charged the three administrators with breaching test security by opening a vault and looking at the Texas Educational Assessment of Minimum Skills before giving it to students.

The test is administered each February to all public-school students in odd-numbered grades.

The administrators—Peggy Jo Gray, the district's elementary language-arts coordinator; Mary Joy Simms, a reading coordinator; and Iris Elaine Griffin, a secondary-school language-arts and foreign-language teacher—have until this week to submit additional information in their defense, according to Joey Lozano, a T.E.A. spokesman. The commissioner of education must then approve the voluntary suspension of their credentials, he added.

Although there was "some indication that information about the test had been shared with other staff members," said Mr. Lozano, it was unlikely that the validity of the test was compromised.

Going To Bat for Bats

While the craze over last summer's hit movie "Batman" may have peaked, students in Denver continue to be bats about bats.

With the help of the Colorado Urban Wildlife Partnership, students and teachers in the city's schools are building homes for a little-known urban dweller, the small brown bat.

The project began as a local complement to Earth Day events, according to Brenda Collison, education coordinator for the Colorado Wildlife Federation, a member of the partnership.

"We wanted something that focused on the nighttime," she said. "Since bats are misunderstood, we wanted to do an educational project on them."

So the group, which also includes the Denver Zoo, the Museum of Natural History, and other organizations, sponsored information packages on how to build bat houses. In addition to plans for building the houses, each package contains a book on bats and promotional materials for educational videos about the creatures. Over the last four to five weeks, more than 800 packages have been distributed to schools, scout troops, and others interested in the order *Chiroptera*.

Although not endangered, the little brown bat often loses habitat when the abandoned buildings it nests in are razed for new development. The bat houses provide a safe haven, said Carron Meaney, curator of mammalogy at the Museum of Natural History, clearly a bat fan.

"The bats are unsung heroes because they consume so many insects and because pesticides are such a problem," she noted.

Pattyanne Corsentino, who teaches science to 7th-grade students at Martin Luther King Jr. Middle School, said that most of her 120 students participated in the bat-house project. She plans to hang some of the houses around the school and under the Platte River viaducts.

"The kids are fascinated," Ms. Corsentino said," because it was something they don't know about. And with the 'Batman' movie craze going on, we couldn't let this one go."

—S.K.G.

Peter Steiner

DISTRICTS

Two Minnesota Educators Indicted Under Child-Abuse Reporting Law

Two Minnesota school administrators have been indicted for allegedly failing to inform law-enforcement authorities about a teacher they suspected of having a sexual relationship with a student.

A grand jury charged Kenneth Doty, superintendent of schools in West Concord, and Raymond Six, principal of West Concord High School, under a 1983 state law that requires educators to contact law-enforcement authorities when they "know or have reason to believe" that child abuse has occurred.

The charges stem from a case involving a female teacher and coach at the high school, who is accused of having an affair with a female student.

Teachers and other school employees who were granted immunity from prosecution in return for their testimony said they had reported rumors of the relationship to the administrators. Neither they nor the administrators, however, reported the matter to authorities, the grand jury concluded.

■ **A high-school student in Pennsylvania has alleged in a federal lawsuit that his First Amendment rights were violated when school officials restricted his distribution of religious pamphlets.**

Charles and Theresa Slotterback filed the suit April 13 in federal district court in Philadelphia on behalf of their son Scott, a sophomore at Interboro Senior High School in Prospect Park.

According to the plaintiffs, the school's principal threatened to suspend or expel Scott if he continued to distribute copies of a religious comic book to schoolmates. They say the principal later changed his mind and allowed the student to distribute the comics outside the school building after school hours, but only twice a year.

The lawsuit contends that the school's policy violates the student's constitutional right to religious freedom.

■ **A Reno (Nev.) High School sophomore has filed suit in federal court alleging that her free-speech rights were violated when school officials suspended her for writing allegedly menacing and obscene messages** in a spiral notebook that circulated among students.

The suit, filed in U.S. district court against the Washoe County School District, claims the district violated the First Amendment rights of five students suspended for writing messages that, the district alleged, were offensive and threatening to teachers.

John N. Schroeder, the lawyer for the plaintiff, Heather Gilbertson, acknowledged that some of the writings in the notebook were strongly worded, but added that the notebook was not intended for publication.

■ **The Chicago Police Department is investigating charges that officers beat schoolchildren who were protesting the firing of their school principal.**

The incident took place outside Morrill Elementary School on April 10. The students met outside the school to protest the district superintendent's firing of Eduardo Cadavid. The local school council earlier had deadlocked on whether to retain Mr. Cadavid.

The origin of the charges is unclear, according to Tina Vicini, a police spokesman. The police, she said, asked students to return to class or face truancy charges. Within an hour, she said, the students were back in the school building without incident.

Ninety minutes later, however, said Ms. Vicini, "the media appeared, accusations of police brutality began to circulate, and some students began complaining of bruises."

The police department is interviewing people who were at the scene, and most witnesses, according to Ms. Vicini, have reported that "there was no evidence of roughhousing and no evidence or complaints of injury" immediately after the protest ended.

Mr. Cadavid could not be reached for comment.

■ **The Tucson, Ariz., school board has voted to eliminate nearly 300 jobs in a move to save the financially troubled district $12.8 million.**

District officials said the board was forced to announce the layoffs after voters in February rejected two property-tax measures that would have boosted the school budget by $24 million.

The budget measure, which goes into effect July 1, will eliminate 75 teaching positions, 24 administrative jobs, and 200 other positions, including school nurses, classroom aides, librarians, counselors, and custodians. Students will also be required to pay between $75 and $175 to participate in all sports and extracurricular activities.

■ **Mayor Kurt L. Schmoke of Baltimore has denied rumors he is seeking to oust Superintendent of Schools Richard Hunter, but said the district would hire a new deputy superintendent to manage its day-to-day operations.**

The Mayor told a press conference April 11 that he supported Mr. Hunter, but that a new chief operating officer would be hired by Mr. Hunter and the school board to take over daily operations.

Recent press accounts had suggested the Mayor was already searching for a replacement for Mr. Hunter. Clinton Coleman, the Mayor's press secretary, denied the rumor, but admitted that the Mayor questions Mr. Hunter's handling of several security matters. In particular, Mr. Schmoke was upset by an incident in which a television reporter, posing as a student, entered several high-school buildings undetected.

The new position will enable Mr. Hunter to concentrate on such duties as developing curriculum and school policy and lobbying for extra funds, Mr. Coleman said.

■ **A federal appeals court has overturned a ruling that upheld at-large voting for school-board members and other officials in Liberty County, Fla.**

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the 11th Circuit ruled this month that black plaintiffs challenging the at-large voting practices in Liberty County had shown that whites there vote as a bloc to defeat black candidates and that the black community is both politically cohesive and large and compact enough to elect a black candidate in single-member-district voting. The judges returned the case to district court for resolution

The county, which is 11 percent black, has never had a black candidate elected to office.

DIMENSIONS

Elected School Officials

Only 4 percent of popularly elected school officials in the United States in 1987 were black or Hispanic, according to data compiled by the U.S. Census Bureau.

Based on a review of elected officeholders in that year, the bureau reports that 85 percent of the 86,772 school-board members, superintendents, and other elected officials in school districts nationwide were white. Two percent were black and another 2 percent Hispanic.

Sixty-six percent of the officials were men.

Data on sex or race, or both, were not available for approximately 10 percent of the officials.

The bureau also reports that 87 percent of elected board members that year were chosen on an at-large basis, while 13 percent were elected from subdistricts.

A total of 2,574 school-board members were appointed, the bureau found. Whether their membership was appointed, elected, or a combination of the two, boards had an average of six members.

The data include officials in the 14,721 independent school districts nationwide, but not in 1,492 dependent districts that are considered part of another government entity.

The report is "1987 Census of Governments, Vol. 1, Government Organization, Number 2, Popularly Elected Officials."

Elected School Officials by Race and Sex

	Total	%	Male	%	Female	%
Total U.S.	86,772	100	57,174	100	20,648	100
White	74,003	85	54,380	95	19,673	95
Black	1,825	2	1,276	2	549	3
Hispanic	1,415	2	1,101	2	314	2
Native American	488	1	347	1	141	1
Asian	91	0.15	70	0.5	21	0.5
Not reported	8,950	10	N/A		N/A	

Note: Details may not total 100% because data on race or sex was not reported, or due to rounding.

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

UPDATE

■ **Thousands of Massachusetts teachers have received layoff notices as a result of the state's budget crisis,** according to a study by the state education department. *(See Education Week, Oct. 18, 1989.)*

According to the survey, which was conducted early this month, 6,111 teachers in 159 school districts were expected to have received pink slips by last week. That represents about 16 percent of the teachers in those districts, the report says.

Commissioner of Education Harold Raynolds Jr. noted that the actual number of layoffs in the districts surveyed probably would be fewer than the number of notices. State-aid payments and the resolution of any local budget problems will likely free up more funds, he said.

Mr. Raynolds added, however, that the statewide total of layoff notices will be higher than 6,111, because only about 65 percent of the state's teachers were included in the survey.

According to the study, other school employees in danger of losing their jobs include 195 support-staff members, 197 administrators, and 450 instructional aides.

■ **Beginning next month, student-commuters in New York City will be able to ride on specially designated, guarded subway trains,** the city's Transit Authority has announced.

A group called "Principals for Safe Passage" this month asked the authority to develop a plan to establish guarded trains for students. The principals were concerned about increased violence against students on their way to and from school. *(See Education Week, April 4, 1990.)*

The pilot program, now being developed by the authority and school officials, probably will begin on the D line, running through Brooklyn, the site of several violent incidents against students, an authority spokesman said. Security officers will ride on at least one specially designated car on each train during mornings and afternoons.

This Little Piggy Went to School

AP/Newsfinder

Fourth-graders at Barton School in Minneapolis got some hands-on experience in farming when a 6-week-old piglet named Perfect 10 visited the school recently.

PEOPLE

■ **Jerome B. Jones,** the first black superintendent of the St. Louis, Mo., school system, has announced his resignation, effective June 30—a year before his contract was due to expire.

Mr. Jones apparently surprised school-board members with the resignation, which came only a week after the school system won approval of its first bond issue in 28 years.

When Mr. Jones came to the district in 1983, it had lost its state AAA bond rating and was under a court order to reduce classroom size.

In recent months, a state audit had criticized Mr. Jones's expenditures, and the board established new guidelines to regulate spending.

Mr. Jones has not announced his future plans.